

**The Ability to Unite Under Crisis:**  
**Ethnic Group Consolidation During Ethnic Conflict in Latin America**

Undergraduate Research Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation with Honors Research Distinction

By Jamie O'Neill

The Ohio State University

May 2020

Project Advisor: Bear Braumoeller,  
Department of Political Science

## Abstract

Ethnic conflict in Latin America has pervaded the region since the colonization of the Spanish. This tension has been present between Latin America's extremely diverse ethnic groups, social classes, and state governments. In specific instances, the region has shown that consolidation under conflict is possible. Due to the ever-widening gap between the wealthy, Caucasian elite and the Indigenous, or otherwise ethnic, minority, groups of rebelling ethnic individuals have combined in the face of the shared threat of repression and inequality. When faced with increasing hardship, in order to form long-lasting, large rebellions, ethnic minorities can replace their highly salient, specific ethnic identities with the broad identity of "being ethnic" or "being a minority". This process is shown using an agent-based model that was developed with the goal of understanding the relationship between the costs of secession/rebellion, the strength of attachment that ethnic individuals feel towards their identities, and the impact of a highly severe, repressive environment. From the model, it can be concluded that while rebellions that are formed by individuals with highly salient ethnic identities are often quicker to develop, rebel movements that are created and grown by individuals who have more moderate attachments are able to better succeed. Also, rebellions can be formed from multiple ethnic groups if faced with a severe enough situation, a shared willingness to set aside ethnic differences, and mutual status of being "ethnic".

## Introduction

There are over 800 confirmed separate Indigenous groups in Latin America (CEPAL, 2014, p. 7). In a country like Bolivia, a reported 41% of Bolivians have Indigenous origins (Minority Rights Group, 2018). Historically, this level of diversity has caused widespread issues of representation and constant human rights violations. Following independence from the Spanish, Latin America has been influenced by military and civilian violence, extreme poverty, high-level corruption, and has been denied a presence in international politics and economics. Even though Latin America has, in general, become more democratic, corruption is still deeply ingrained and Latin Americans have increasing levels of mistrust in their governments; Indigenous peoples, specifically, even more so lack faith in the good will of their respective states (Inter-American Development Bank, 2016). Indigenous groups have been significantly poorer than non-Indigenous populations, they are consistently excluded from seats in their governments, and they often lack access to modern amenities (such as healthcare, electricity, and transportation). With the worsening of widespread corruption, as exposed in the recent Petrobras scandal, questions have to be asked about the response of Latin America's millions of Indigenous peoples.

There have been very few separatist movements worldwide that have ever been truly successful, but due to Latin America's ever increasing hardships in addition to the very strong non-state bonds that come along with salient ethnic identities, Latin America may be in the position where widespread rebellion and/or secession could flourish. The region has had its fair share of secessionist movements and rebellions, many of which had some level of success. Horowitz (1985) states that "the strength of a secessionist movement and the heterogeneity of its

region are inversely related” (p. 267). He goes on to say that secessionist movements like this often end up divided and weak because those seeking independence are often quite politically and ethnically dissimilar. However, in the case of Latin American Indigenous rebellions, those rebelling are often fighting for the same cause and hoping for the same outcomes. The high dissatisfaction Indigenous citizens have with their governments, paired with long-standing ethnic tensions and high levels of diversity could lead to successful rebellions.

Separatist movements and ethnic rebellions often fail because of external intervention, the high costs of secession, or the fleeting nature of ethnically driven conflict. While this may be true, it ignores the possibility for multi-ethnic collaborations making secession and rebellion more successful. The idea of a shared identity of “being ethnic” or “being Indigenous” rather than being of a specific ethnic or Indigenous group could lead to large groups of similar people. This is a historically supported phenomenon in Latin America, stemming back to the 1700s rebellions against Spain’s limitations. Time and time again, there have been rebel and/or secessionist movements in the region that combine Indigenous groups in order to form majorities and pool resources. The widespread, severe issues of corruption and lack of representation combined with the modern spread of information may, in the future, allow this ability to form successful multi-ethnic rebellions; this theory is in opposition to common beliefs that cultural differences and costs prevent such an event from occurring. Considering this phenomenon in the modern age is important; in the past the language barrier was much more severe, Natives had very little access to complicated weaponry, and communication technology was not widely available. With new phones, widespread common languages in the region like Spanish and English, and new platforms for Indigenous political leaders, the limitations of the past are less likely to lead to the end of rebellions.

While case examples of this consolidation of minority groups is historically documented, more recent cases are hard to discern due to both the slow progression of such movements and lack of news coverage on Native issues. By using an agent-based model in order to mimic the current social circumstances of Latin America and the Indigenous groups there, micro-level patterns of Indigenous actors under strain can be established. With the ties of both ethnic and national attachment on an individual level, the model is able to discern the driving forces behind this proposed consolidation and the success of rebel or secessionist movements.

## **Background**

### ***Defining Latin American Ethnicity***

Latin America's extreme ethnic diversity is an important factor to consider when discussing ethnicity in the region. In this case, ethnicity and ethnic groups are being defined as groups with shared descent-based attributes (Chandra, 2006, p. 397). These groups can be defined very broadly as an overarching label like Caucasian or Native American, however, as discussed in an article by Indian Country Today, there may be a preference to label each individual tribe (with their own unique governing system, culture, and heritage) as its own ethnic group (Champagne, 2014). Throughout this paper, the broad ethnic group of Native American or Indigenous will be used but each tribe will also be considered as subset ethnic groups.

In a country like Argentina, 85% of their population is considered Caucasian. Caucasians, in this context, are people who arrived post-colonization and have fully European ancestry. There have been many waves of immigration since colonization, the most influential

being post-World War II and its influx of Jewish, Italian, and other European groups. Caucasians who have emigrated more recently are often extremely wealthy compared to the local populations. An example of the impact of emigrated wealth is Juan Carlos Varela, the former president of Panama and a descendant of a line of politically connected millionaires (Czark, 2016). Criollo people (also commonly spelled as Creole, but not to be confused with the Haitian Creoles) are those who are of pure Spanish descent, but were not born in Spain, specifically from families stemming from the colonial era (those born in Spain in the colonial era are called Peninsulares), and in most counts are considered Caucasian. However, Criollos are socially and culturally dissimilar from more recent European immigrants. In the colonial era, the Natives and Criollos had the “shared fatality of trans-Atlantic birth” (Anderson, 2006, p. 57). The Criollos were both not able to truly benefit from the extractive and superior nature of Spanish colonialism, but they were also not as harshly repressed as the “savage” Natives. The following quote from Simón Bolívar’s Letter from Jamaica explains the Criollo struggle when considering the fight for independence from the Spanish:

We are neither Indians nor Europeans, but a species midway between the legitimate owners of the land and the Spanish usurpers. Being Americans by birth and Europeans by right, we must both dispute the claims of Natives and resist external invasion. Thus, we find ourselves in the most extraordinary and complicated situation. (Bolívar, 1815)

In the modern era, Criollos of purely Spanish colonial descent are very uncommon as intermixing occurred more and more often after the end of colonialism. What has replaced Criollos as an ethnic group that is not quite Caucasian but not culturally Native American, are the Mestizos. The term Mestizos was defined in the past as people of mixed Caucasian and Native American descent. Today, however, Mestizo is used as a term for someone who does not necessarily have salient Native roots but have some Native heritage. Mestizos make up the

majority of most country populations in Latin America. Native Americans (or AmerIndians) are also extremely populous in some countries, specifically Peru, Guatemala, and Bolivia where Natives make up the majority of each country's total population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). Native Americans, as members of the broad ethnic group, are in one way or another affiliated culturally and genetically with a tribe. They face different struggles from the Caucasians and Mestizos of the region. "Indigenous Peoples face poverty rates that are on average twice as high as for the rest of Latin Americans," Natives are often poor and lack social support and without the use of international agencies to act as a voice for these people there is little chance for positive change (Calvo-González, 2016). In addition to these groups, there are even smaller ethnic minority groups: Asians, Mulattoes, Africans, Zambos, and Pardos.

There have been multiple attempts to unite Latin America's ethnic groups. Bolívar dreamed of a single overarching Latin American state, but his vision quickly deteriorated in the years leading up to his death. It was impossible to govern people in regional areas that were hard to access, and due to the ever-present ethnic diversity, groups struggled to agree on overarching governing systems. Bolívar had to accept that Latin America was not the United States, even though he wished to model Latin American countries off of the new US model (Pagden, 1990, p. 139). While the United States was able to join together under mutual distaste for European rule (and due to Native genocide, did not have to deal with many Native rebellions), Latin America was too large and too wildly diverse for a single state to become a reality. Continuing this desire, the "united/cosmic race" or *la raza cosmica* was a term coined by a 1929 Mexican presidential candidate, José Vasconcelos, to describe his desire for a single, linked race of people that had no ties to ethnicity or color. Simultaneously, Vasconcelos wanted to prove that Latin American people were not inferior, that Latin American cultures were valuable, but also that they didn't

actually matter and that those cultures could be easily consolidated. He also vouched for eugenics, which makes him even more contradictory, but his racial views of a low ethnicity Latin America were propagated in his time period (Chiu et al., 2013). “Indigenismo” as a political ideology of bringing Natives under the control of the state and assimilating Native culture with Mestizo culture has been rampant throughout the past two centuries.

There has been a shift since around 1989 in how the state has to respond to Native culture and representation. The International Labor Organization’s (ILO) Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries takes the approach of “fundamental respect for the cultures, ways of life, traditions, and customary laws of these peoples as enduring peoples” (Dandler, 1999, p.122) State governments must also consult and have representation from Native groups, also the governments must recognize that some tribes have been separated by state borders and allow for communication. State constitutions have also been amended in recent years in many states including Guatemala, Colombia, and Brazil, and these amendments often reinforce the international regulations. The election of Evo Morales in Bolivia in 2005 was unprecedented because he was raised in an impoverished Native environment and served to represent the interests of his own Native group and others around Bolivia. Mestizo leaders have also been more common, notable examples include Lula de Silva in Brazil and Lucio Gutiérrez in Ecuador.

### ***Modern Latin American Corruption and Social Issues***

While some Latin American countries are labelled as democracies, even those countries have major problems in the way that the law impacts each individual and each social group.



Guillermo O'Donnell argues that there are five main gaps in the rule of law in Latin America: flaws in existing laws, uneven application of the law, exploitative relations between bureaucracies and ordinary citizens, poor access to the judiciary and fair process, and sheer lawlessness. The combination of these problems, O'Donnell states, "indicate a severe incompleteness of the state" (O'Donnell, 1999, p. 314). There are still laws that discriminate against women and minorities even in states that are labelled political democracies. Wealthy people very rarely have to face legal issues, but people who are both poor and innocent often cannot even defend themselves (or face discrimination in the judicial system when they do). There are no allowances for people without transportation to get to court and if an Indigenous person speaks a less common language there is little hope for a translator (Garro, 1999, p. 282).

Corruption plagues both local and state governments, from presidents to traffic cops. Rose-Ackerman (2016) describes grand corruption as corruption occurring "at the highest levels of government" and can be exemplified by government official bribe taking leading towards favoritism to certain private firms or biased votes in legislation (p. 27). The Petrobras scandal (also known as Operation Car Wash or the Odebrecht scandal) is a very recent and still ongoing investigation into the scheme of continent-wide money laundering. The investigation started in 2014 and concerned individuals (known as *doleiros*, a person who exchanges money on the black market) who used gas stations and car washes to legitimize illegally gained funds. However, it was soon uncovered that behind these *doleiros* was an executive from Brazil's state-owned oil company, Petrobras, who confessed to have been "deliberately overpaying on contracts with various suppliers for office construction, drilling rigs, refineries and exploration vessels" (Guttermann, 2019, p. 198). The excess money would then go into a fund used to pay politicians who would in turn support Petrobras executives in a cycle of bribery and vote buying. Former

Brazilian president Lula de Silva was sentenced to 12 years in prison for his involvement with the scandal, signaling the possible end to the “Pink Tide” or the wave of leftist regimes that had pervaded Latin America in the 2000s. From Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela to Ollanta Humala in Peru, dozens of politicians and company executives were charged with bribe taking in connection to Operation Car Wash. While some sources say corruption is on the downward trend in the region, many Latin Americans would disagree. From surveys done by Transparency International (2019), ¼ of citizens in Latin America have been offered money for their vote and 65% think that their government is run by private interests. There is an argument to be made about the possibility of Latin American corruption being on the decline as Operation Car Wash was a positive change that was quite successful at prosecuting the high-level politicians who were involved. However, recently there have been violent protests from Native groups fighting over environmental rights and civil rights. With the election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and the ousting of Evo Morales in Bolivia, Native rights in many regions are more fragile than ever with the return of neo-liberal policies and right-wing leadership. In a recent speech on January 23, 2020, Bolsonaro stated, “The Indians are evolving, more and more they are human beings like us” (Universo Online, 2020). Also, in front of Congress in 2016 saying, “In 2019 we’re going to rip up Raposa Serra do Sol (Brazilian Native land). We’re going to give all the ranchers guns” (Shenoy, 2019). Or in Bolivia where interim president Jeanine Anez speaking of former Indigenous president Evo Morales, “Let’s not even allow the arbitrary, the violent and the savage return to power. I think that it is the responsibility of all of us” (Bender, 2020).

### ***Historical Rebellion, Secession, and Consolidation***

To support the underlying theory that groups that are ethnically or culturally dissimilar have the ability to consolidate when faced with intense hardships, it is necessary to view the historical examples of such cases. While many minority groups could theoretically exemplify this phenomenon, Indigenous groups present the most compelling cases. Native groups are often viewed together as one people, but many tribes are extremely culturally and linguistically dissimilar and often co-exist in close proximity. Latin America is prime ground for seeing possible consolidation because of the wide variety of Native groups, a history of lack of representation and injustices for minorities, and for extreme ethnic and linguistic diversity; the region is fairly unique in these traits, however, the United States' Indigenous groups throughout history could also be viewed for possible examples. From 1712 to 2019, there are numerous cases under which ethnic consolidation under stress occurred in the Western Hemisphere. Examples of this phenomenon highlight the reasons why consolidation occurs in the first place, why some rebellions failed, and what would be necessary to form a successful, ethnically heterogeneous secessionist movement.

### ***Mexico's Tzeltal Rebellion***

The Tzeltal Rebellion of 1712 occurred during the Spanish colonization of Central and South America, however, it is relevant to modern day struggles for Indigenous sovereignty. The reasons for the rebellion were somewhat similar to other fights for independence by people repressed by their colonizers; although, the way in which the rebellion was conducted was

unprecedented for the region. The Spanish were simultaneously religiously and economically motivated to colonize and thus established numerous missions throughout the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Instead of fully embodying Spanish Catholicism, Natives combined new Catholic symbols, figures, and hierarchies with their own local deities, hierarchies, and ceremonies. The Tzeltal Rebellion of 1712 occurred in response primarily to a dramatic lack of representation and increasing taxes and tithes (Klein, 1966, p. 249). Eventually, when hardship stemmed from the exploitative nature of Spanish colonialism, religion was at the forefront of the battle due to the highly religious nature of the situation. Native religious cults formed around the idea of the Virgin Mary; Klein (1966) states that they saw her as “an avenging agent who would wipe out the oppression and lift the yoke from the shoulders of her suffering followers” (p. 255). With the influence of Sebastian Gomez de la Gloria, a Tzotzil man claiming to be divinely given the position of bishop, paired with the impressionable, struggling Natives, a cult called the Church of the Virgin was created. The cult created governmental structures, appointed leaders, collected taxes, and then organized a massive rebellion of Natives. “Small mutinies began to occur apparently spontaneously, throughout the Tzeltal region,” Native leaders of dozens of Tzeltal speaking towns came together in a confederation against all enemies until the Spaniards were destroyed (p. 254). They quickly put together thousands of men and had a multi-front battle plan. The major limiting factor for not growing followers was the language barrier present between Indigenous languages; those speaking the Tzeltal language were able to join but other tribes hesitated. Gomez de Gloria’s government was not hastily planned but the rebellion burned out fairly quickly due to quick Spanish response and a lack of access to modern weaponry. “Had the proper arms existed, there is every reason to suppose a more successful outcome might have resulted,” if this rebellion had occurred in modern day with modern

communication, current cheap and accessible weaponry, and easier transportation, the rebellion may have been much more long lasting (p. 263).

### ***Pontiac's War***

Farther north and with a different colonizer, a similar situation arose nearly half a century later. The Natives in today's mid-western United States rebelled after becoming a conquered people instead of allies. They had been used to friendly trading with the French, but the status quo changed dramatically after the French defeat in the French and Indian War. The British considered the Natives to be savages so, unlike the French, they decided on an end to gift giving and intermarriage, nor would they need permission to build forts on Native land. They thought the Natives would follow orders because they were afraid of the British (Gasparro, 2007, p. 46). Fort Detroit was taken over by the British after the war, thus the fort no longer sold ammunition or weapons to the Natives. The leaders of the newly occupied fort then limited where the Natives could hunt. In 1761, the Natives started their response to the unfriendly British, Seneca leaders went to Detroit to ask for the assistance of the Ottawas, Hurons, and Chippewas in an attack on Fort Detroit. However, the plan was discovered and instead continuing with the plan, the Natives chose to wait until they had even more followers. The Delawares, Shawnees, Mingoes, and Potawotamies then joined after a "prophet" started preaching that the Natives were being punished for allowing the British to come onto their land (Gasparro, 2007, p. 48). Pontiac, an Ottawa leader, called for a grand council and came up with a complicated plan to subtly spy on the fort for information prior to attacking. The siege lasted for six months ending with a stalemate and many British killed. Then there were numerous other victories: Fort Sandusky,

Fort St. Joseph, Fort Miami, Fort Ouiatenon, Fort Michilimackinac, and a multitude more. With more victories, even initially hesitant Natives joined the fight. The Natives were constantly underestimated which made them so successful, plus the sheer manpower from the numerous tribes joining together made their victories possible. Unlike the Tzeltal Rebellion, the colonizers were not prepared and did not start to seriously counteract the Natives until ten forts had already fallen. The rebellion was quashed when the British dispensed the smallpox blankets, the same blankets that are so often discussed as accidentally given in American history (Ranlet, 2000, p. 427). The combination of germ warfare and the eventual appearance of the British Army led to the end of Pontiac's War. However, the war is an example of how numerous Native tribes can come together, no matter their cultural differences, under the right circumstances.

### ***Peru's Tupac-Amaru II***

Peru's colonial era saw a constant stream of Native rebellions in response to the Spanish invasion into their lands. Prior to colonization, the Incas were spread along most of the western coast of South America; by the 1570's, however, a large proportion of their population and their government was completely destroyed. The list of grievances held by the Natives in the region of Bolivia and Peru were similar to the problems faced by the Mexican Natives. The Incan originating Natives were often forced to perform labor in mines, were unable to be recognized in court, and often had no say to their conditions, taxes, or rights. Jose Gabriel Tupac Amaru was the direct descendant of the last Inca emperor, Tupac Amaru I, but struggled with claiming his titles and the Spanish governors (corregidores) questioned his legitimacy (Campbell, 1979, p. 8). These governors were also the authorities which had been heavily taxing and exploiting the

Natives. The Tupac Amaru rebellion began in 1780 with the execution of a corregidor, Governor Arriaga, and following this Tupac Amaru asked for followers “of every quality and condition” to end the harsh treatment by the corregidores. Tupac Amaru freed the black slaves and then was able to amass an army of over 60,000 men within only a few months. Amaru stated, “I have acted... to preserve the peace and well-being of Indians, mestizos, mambos, as well as Native-born whites and blacks” (Chambers and Chasteen, 2010, p. 33). His supporters consisted of numerous Native groups of the region and of people of differing languages. The goal was to help the people suffering from Spanish control, no matter their ethnicity. Eventually, the rebellion was ended by a traitor after a series of overwhelming Native victories. Tupac Amaru was executed, but even with his death, the rebellions in Peru did not stop, “Nearly every part of the viceroyalty of Peru suffered from some form of rebellion, although not all of these were directly tied to the Tupac Amaru revolt” (Campbell, 1979, p. 11).

### ***Mexico’s Zapatista Movement***

Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico, has a Native population that makes up 27% of the state. There are 12 main Native groups, but there are 56 recognized Indigenous languages in the region (Government of Chiapas, 2020). The EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional) or the Zapatista Army of National Liberation is a socialist, militant group that formed in response to the lack of Native representation in the Mexican government. However, the driving force behind the group was NAFTA and the fears at the time that international goods would harm local business which Natives relied on for their livelihoods; the EZLN released their First Declaration and Revolutionary Laws on the day that NAFTA went into effect on January 1,

1994. They declared war on Mexico and the EZLN's supporters consisted of numerous Native groups that had been subject to repression by the Mexican government, including the Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Chol, and Tjobal Native groups (Godelmann, 2014). Two years after the initial uprising and hundreds of deaths later, the San Andres Peace Accords were signed in support of Native self-determination. This did not stop the fighting and did not satisfy the group's requests but over the past two decades the EZLN has reshaped Native representation in Mexico and has allowed for increased Native autonomy. Additionally, in the 2000s, the group stated in its Sixth Declaration that it stood to represent "all the exploited and dispossessed of Mexico" (Zapatista Army, 2005, p. 10).

### ***Bolivia: Kataristas to Evo Morales***

While secession and separatist movements are rare, the drive of Indigenous groups to gain representation or independence from their countries is historically abundant in Central and South America. Bolivia, until recently the poorest country in South America (now surpassed only by Venezuela) and simultaneously the most Indigenous (by percentage of total population), has struggled with a lack of representation for their Native class. Around 50% of Bolivia's population belongs to one of the country's 36 Native groups; however, until 2005, there was very little representation for them in the government and often they were the poorest and least educated of the entire country (Gigler, 2009, p. 30). Bolivia has had a sordid past of military dictatorships and repressive regimes, but since 1985 they have been labelled as a democracy. Though given the title of a democratic regime, numerous corrupt presidents have abused the



rights of citizens and have brought the country more economic hardship (see the Cochabamba Water War and Plan Dignidad).

Looking back through Bolivia's history it becomes clear that Bolivia stands as the best example of the consolidation of a minority or Indigenous class when dealing with hardship. Native peoples did not gain many civic rights in Bolivia until 1952 and even then there were multiple instances of an attempt to socialize this new Indigenous peasant class into Spanish-Bolivian culture. A brief democratic moment in 1952 turned into military dictatorship after military dictatorship for three decades (Albó, 1994, p. 58). The dictatorship under General Banzer starting in 1970 contained some of the worst atrocities of mass slaughter. 3,000 political opponents were arrested, 200 were killed, and thousands of citizens were tortured; the Ministry of the Interior even gained the nickname "The Horror Chambers" as that where most of these political prisoners were held (Schipani, 2009). The Katarista movement, named after Tupac Katari, the leader of a failed 1781 rebellion against the Spanish, started in the 1960s both in the cities and the rural areas among the Natives as a cultural reawakening. However, after Banzer's reign and subsequent massacre, the rural Aymara people turned against the government (even though the Aymara were the least affected by the Banzer regime as they are located in very rural parts of Bolivia). The Aymaras quickly grew support among the other Native groups by using an emphasis on tradition and their common origins. In 1980, Bolivia saw the first nominations of people from the Indigenous peasant class as leftist candidates. Between 1982 and 1985, Bolivia went through its last major democratic hurdle to end the era of post colonization violence. But with the rewriting of their constitution and a delay on the Indigenous proposed legislation due to the new democratic government, there was reduced trust in the Katarista movement, there was

also internal struggles in the overarching movement which led into a split into two major parties, MRTK and MITKA. MRTK then split again into the FULKA and MRTKL (Albó, 1994, p. 67).

In 2005, Evo Morales was elected president after running a campaign supporting expanded Native rights and reshaping the country's democratic institutions. Between 1994 and 2005, Morales went from a coca leaf farmer (coca being the natural leaf source of cocaine but used in Bolivia for medicinal and religious purposes) and uneducated Indigenous person to the political leader of the country and the first high-level representation for the large Native population (Brienen, 2016, p. 78). He ran under his own political party "Movement Towards Socialism" or MAS-IPSP (IPSP: Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples); an important thing to note is that MAS is not truly a socialist party (Morales claims MAS to be closer to communitarianism), but Morales used the name of the defunct party "Movement Towards Socialism" in 1994 as he did not have time to register a new name. People were rabid to support him after years of hardship and extreme poverty and he was the first president ever in Bolivia to be elected with an absolute majority. Morales was then in power until 2019, but his presidency was widely denigrated by Bolivia's wealthy, non-Indigenous elite. He was supported by his broad Native supporter base even through obvious constitutional violations, environmental abuses, and corruption charges against some of the members of his cabinet. Morales' supporter base is a case of high ethnic attachment paired with a highly severe situation leaving Natives with no other choice than to join together to support a common goal.

The 2019 election for Bolivia's presidency caused a major case of democratic backsliding which has impacted the Native population significantly. While Bolivia established a two-term limit for the presidency in 2009, Evo Morales chose to ignore it and went to the Bolivians Supreme Court to change their constitution. This was not a popular decision and when issues

started occurring in the 2019 presidential election, people immediately suspected vote manipulation. Massive protests broke out that night and within days Bolivian police were firing tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters that tried to reach Morales' recently built, multi-million-dollar skyscraper. Morales then resigned after being pressured by the people and the military, even though he won the election, in order to keep the peace. However, the damage to democracy was done. Most other members of MAS also left the government, there was widespread confusion, no one wanted to take up the presidency, protests continued and only got more violent. Jeanine Áñez is currently interim president. Áñez describes herself as right-wing and anti-Morales. 31 people have died since Áñez took office, most of those people being Indigenous Morales supporters. She claimed that she would set a new date for a legitimate election, however, that has not occurred (Faiola and Krygier, 2019). Bolivia's democracy worsens each day as protests continue, more deaths are caused, and a new right-wing leader has been replacing parts of the government that, in the past, have functioned democratically. Native peoples have once again joined together under a common goal to fight against this non-Native ruler.

### ***The Why of Ethnic Rebellion***

In summary of the preceding cases, there are certain patterns that emerge when considering Native rebellions in the West. They were all caused by some severe damage to Native rights to representation, land, self-determination, and/or cultural individuality. Additionally, in the case studies, a way of increasing their success was through group consolidation. While Native groups are all labelled under the overarching label "Indigenous", each group (or tribe) has their own unique culture and possibly their own language. Even so,

because they share an ethnic label, and similar grievances with their colonizer or government, they have been able to combine in order to be a more effective force.

There are different arguments by various authors on exactly why ethnic rebellion, or rebellion in general, occurs and these arguments are important to consider when creating a model that exemplifies the patterns of rebellion. According to Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010), there are three factors in which ethnic conflict against a government is more likely to occur, “(1) the more representatives of an ethnic group are excluded from state power, especially if they experienced a loss of power in the recent past, (2) the higher their mobilizational capacity is, and (3) the more they have experienced conflict in the past” (p. 87). According to Horowitz (1985), “Riots, polarizing elections, or military coups can serve as signs that alternatives to secession are unpromising or that negotiations would be futile. Such events catalyze separatism” (p. 262). Gurr (1993) comes to a similar finding when viewing communal mobilization post-1945, “that cultural identity, inequalities, and historical loss of autonomy all contribute substantially” (p. 161).

The mediating factor to why a group would choose to rebel against the state for either greater representation or independence, is the cost of secession. There are numerous costs associated with attempting to secede from a state that are not only economic but also political. Horowitz (2003) argues that even if a secessionist region successfully secedes, the new region would still be heterogeneous and that there will always be a minority group. He also states, “A secession or partition converts a domestic ethnic dispute into a more dangerous international one” (p. 55). The backlash of international actors is a major cost and the risk of warfare or violent international suppression rises. Dion states that, “secessionist movements are rooted in two types of perceptions: the fear inspired by the union and the confidence inspired by

secession... secessions are improbable in well-established democracies because these two perceptions are unlikely to exist simultaneously at a high level of intensity” (Dion, 1996, p. 271). Secession is highly unlikely or impossible when confidence of success is low and/or fear of the state harming the group is low. In a case where possible success is unknown but a group has a reasonable expectation that their culture will be repressed or their economic situation will worsen, secession turns into a more beneficial option even with the possible costs.

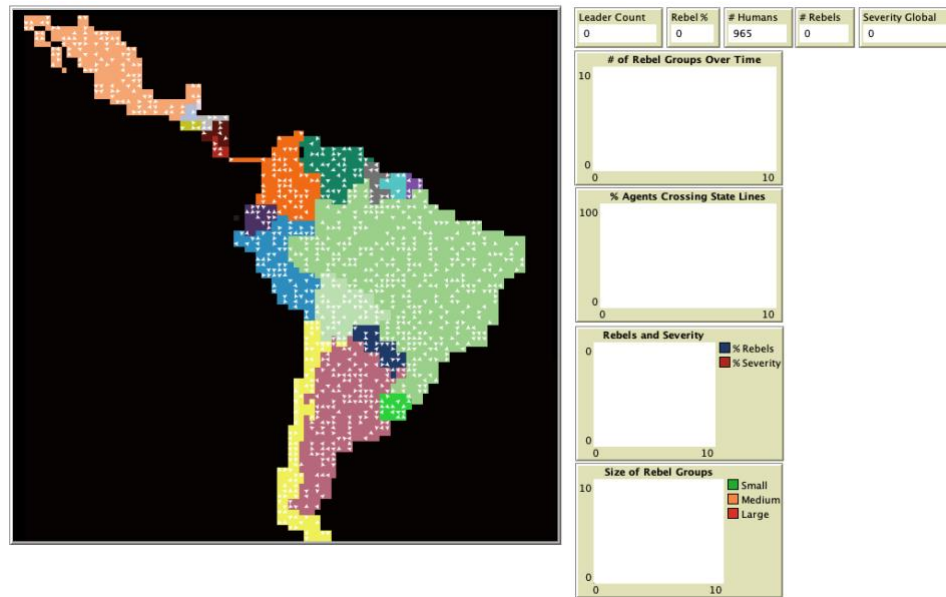
## **Modeling Ethnic Consolidation During Rebellion**

### ***Model Description***

The following model seeks to reach conclusions concerning the levels of hardship and ethnicity necessary to sustain and grow an ethnic rebellion. Netlogo is the program that was used to create the following agent-based model; further simplified, Netlogo is a computer program under which a user is able to create a simulation with individual agents, all with the goal of witnessing how groups of individuals behave under certain conditions. The following image, *Figure 1*, is an image of this thesis’ model of ethnic consolidation prior to the “running” or start of the simulation.

Using a map of Latin America with current state lines drawn, agents (each representing an individual) are dispersed throughout the simulation on available land. The agents each start with a variety of attributes that will lead to them making decisions about their chance of rebellion as the model progresses. The choices that agents are able to make vary depending on these attributes, attributes include: ethnic group, ethnicity (saliency of ethnic identity), patriotism, and

natural resources at an agent's disposal. Agents choose to either avoid, join, or lead rebel movements depending on the previously stated factors; they move across the map, using resources, finding agents to lead or follow them, and bolster support for their cause. Eventually, agents move to cluster into rebel groups across the region and as the severity of the situation changes, so do the agents' choices about the benefits of rebellion.



*Figure 1: Netlogo Model Interface at Start*

### ***Variables and Sliders***

As stated earlier, there are three conditions discussed by Cederman, Wimmer, and Min that increase the chance of rebellion: great exclusion/repression, high mobilization capacity, and a past of numerous conflicts. Each of these traits are represented in the model. The increasing severity is used to represent the increasing number of conflicts, while the repression and

mobilization capacity are found in agents' attributes. Agents are individually given a random *Ethnicity* value and a random *Ethnic Group*, the *Ethnic Group* that the agent belongs to may or may not be salient; if an agent is highly attached to their *Ethnic Group* then their *Ethnicity* value will be close to 1, while if an agent is not attached to their *Ethnic Group* their *Ethnicity* value will be close to 0. If an agent is highly ethnic they will not be as attached to their state (as supported by the evidence of the high rates of dissatisfaction that minorities hold towards their governments in Latin America), but they will also be more likely to rebel and join with people of their own ethnic group. The last factor which satisfies the high mobilization capacity factor is the *Resources* value. While the elevation of Latin America is not visible in the simulation, each patch (small area of land) does have an elevation value that corresponds to its real world elevation; the elevation value then corresponds to a natural resources value and a vision radius, the rule being: the higher the elevation, the lower the natural resources and the lower the vision radius. This is used to approximate the genuine effect of geography on rebel movements; while the modern age allows for easier communication, geography still makes physically bringing together people who may not have access to fast transportation more difficult. Natural resources can also be interpreted to mean that lower elevations, especially coastal areas, will have greater access to trade and international goods. In order to mediate the effects of ethnicity and provide a fuller image of possible deterrents to secession, agents are also given a random *Patriotism* value. The *Patriotism* value stays stagnant for each agent throughout the stimulation to represent an individual's political views.

In addition to the individual agents' attributes, the user can choose to move various sliders in order to more directly impact all of the agents as seen in the following *Figure 2*. The slider *Turtle-Proportion* is used to increase or decrease population density, *#-Ethnic-Groups* can

change how many completely separate ethnic groups are present, and *Boundary-Cross-Threshold* allows for ethnic individuals to ignore state lines. The slider *Global-Ethn-Attach* is able to be used in order to globally change how important ethnicity is to all individuals. The slider *Costs-of-Secession* is the global cost of attempting to rebel against a state; this of course is not representative of a real world scenario where different countries face different levels of hardship in corruption, but is instead trying to mimic a situation of region-wide corruption and widespread international backlash.

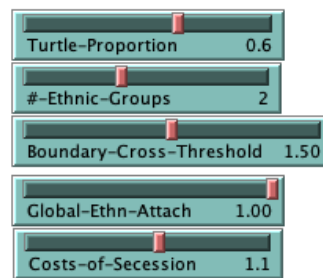


Figure 2: Netlogo Sliders

Severity of hardship is the catalyst that begins group formation, without a difficult situation of some sort, there is no reason for rebellion. At the beginning of the simulation, the severity of the political and economic situation is set globally to zero, as the model runs the hardship severity increases linearly throughout the region. The increase in hardship causes the agents to make different decisions and form or leave rebel groups. If not taking into consideration possible costs of secession or national attachment, as severity increases most agents would choose to rebel against their state (as there would be no reason to remain passive). The severity is linear (increasing by .02 per tick, until reaching a cap of 2.00)<sup>1</sup> for the same reason that the Costs-of-Secession are the same for each agent: even though this would not

<sup>1</sup> .02 with a cap of 2 was used instead of a .01 increase with a cap of 1 solely to increase the speed at which the model ran. The difference has no impact on the model's progression.



accurately emulate the real world in which hardship differs from country to country, it is necessary because ethnic groups are often separated by state lines and not all conflicts are driven by specific actions by one state or another. Oftentimes, it is the culmination of years of repression that lead to rebel movements and thus the severity of the situation increases linearly throughout the simulation.

### ***Rebellion, Leadership, and Group Formation***

The culmination of these attributes and sliders leads to agents making decisions on their movements, group preferences, and leadership status. *Figure 3* shows the calculation that each agent makes in order to decide whether they will rebel or choose to remain neutral; following that, if in fact they choose to rebel, then there is a calculation about whether they will be a leader or a follower.

```
ask humans [set risk (Severity + ethnic-tie)
             set aversion (Costs-of-Secession + patriotism)

             set leadership (risk - aversion) + resources
```

*Figure 3: Code for Risk/Aversion Calculation*

Agents who are in an incredibly severe situation and are highly ethnically driven will be much more risky and willing to rebel. However, the costs of seceding and the agents' predetermined patriotic attitude towards their home country are the mediating factors. If an agent's risk-taking motivation is greater than their aversion to rebellion, then they will choose to rebel. The rebel agents are then given a leadership score based off of how risky they are and how many resources

they have. The higher the leadership score, the higher the chance a rebel agent will choose to become a leader of a new rebel group rather than a follower.

Leaders move around the map to collect resources and find other agents that would be willing to join their rebellion. An agent can fail to be a leader if there are other agents in their close proximity that have a higher leadership score; the leader will choose to defer to the better or riskier leader and then can become one of their followers. The leaders with the highest amount of resources and followers are able to better succeed at creating a long-lasting rebellion. There are, however, issues with sustaining such groups. Followers can choose to leave a very large group if they are on the outskirts, especially if there is another new, better leader in close proximity. The most significant determinant of which agents choose to join a leader's group is the salience of the agents' specific ethnic group. In hypothetical terms, an agent of Ethnic Group A, who is strongly attached to their identity as being part of Ethnic Group A, may hesitate in joining with a leader from Ethnic Group B. However, a different agent, who is only moderately attached to Ethnic Group A, will see no issue with joining a leader from a different ethnic group. These opinions can change over time in the model through the "influences" of surrounding agents.

One of the effects programmed into the model in order to represent a sort of "trickle-down" effect of attachment to the group leader is the mechanism of influences. There are three different influences based off of the vision radius of each agent. Further simplified: if an agent has more rebel agents surrounding them, their incentive to rebel will increase. If an agent is surrounded with many patriotic agents, their aversion to rebellion increases. The final influence is ethnicity, the salience of an agent's ethnic identity will increase or decrease depending on the number of agents that share their same ethnicity in their proximity. These influences were

created with the goal of better mimicking real world behaviors; rebellions often do not succeed and, as seen in the previously mentioned case studies, the composition of your neighbors impacts the chance of the formation of a long-lasting rebel movement.

### ***Ethnic Burnout***

From various case studies concerning rebellions in the region, it is clear that there is some factor of burnout when it comes to ethnic conflict. A sense of belonging to an ethnic group is not enough to maintain membership in a rebel movement. Ethnic rebellions are often unorganized, fleeting, and the fight for minority rights causes a more aggressive approach. In the cases discussed earlier, the most successful secessionist movements were those that were well planned, had amassed resources (both in weaponry and funds), and had asked for the assistance of other ethnic minorities. Pontiac's War exemplifies this well as with only a single Native group in the beginning their plans were easily thwarted, but with planning and the combination of groups, a much more successful rebellion was able to be formed. In order for this model to account for the large amounts of rebellions that have been extremely short-lived due to the aggressive nature of ethnic conflict, a burnout timer was implemented. This timer, as pictured in *Figure 4*, reduces the saliency of a specific ethnic identity over time once an agent is a member or leader of a rebellion.

```
ask humans with [rebel = 1 and ethnic-tie >= 1][set ethnic-tie (ethnic-tie - (rebel-time / 100))]
```

*Figure 4: Code for Ethnic Burnout Timer*

The timer allows for groups to disband if the bolstering influences of other agents are not enough to maintain the group. Even though the timer reduces the ethnic saliency of the agents, the timer

resets if an agent stops rebelling so an agent can once again be ethnically driven if they join another group. However, an agent can still choose to remain a rebel even without ethnicity if the severity of the situation is high enough and their surroundings are highly influential.

### ***Model Findings***

The following *Figure 5* is the final visualization of the model at its conclusion. Through the use of the mechanisms mentioned prior, agents flock together in order to form rebel groups. In order to quantify if the groups are multi-ethnic, group size measures were used that separated groups into small, medium, and large. Small groups being 1% of the total population, medium meaning 3% of the total population, and large being any group over 5% of the total population of agents in the model. A group could not be considered large if ethnic groups did not consolidate as there would not be enough agents in their area of their same ethnicity to form such a group. The visualization aspect of the model is also compelling, as exemplified in *Figure 5*, each group has their own specific color. Agents who remain white are non-rebels. The color, while purely for aesthetic purposes, highlights the different clusters of groups well; it makes it clear where large groups form and if groups are overlapping.

Throughout viewing hundreds of simulations, large groups easily form within current-day Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia. The lower elevation and higher resources makes it easier for agents to collect resources, see other agents, and combine with smaller groups. In countries like current-day Peru and Argentina, agents struggle to join together in mass when faced with mountainous regions. These findings are supported by case studies of failed rebellions: long or treacherous distances between groups limits communication; smaller guerilla groups like the

Shining Path in Peru often find it difficult to amass followers as they mostly occupy Peru's rural, mountainous areas. Agents also do not limit themselves to staying within state lines, many agents when faced with groups of ethnically similar individuals will be easily influenced to cross state lines even if there is more risk involved.

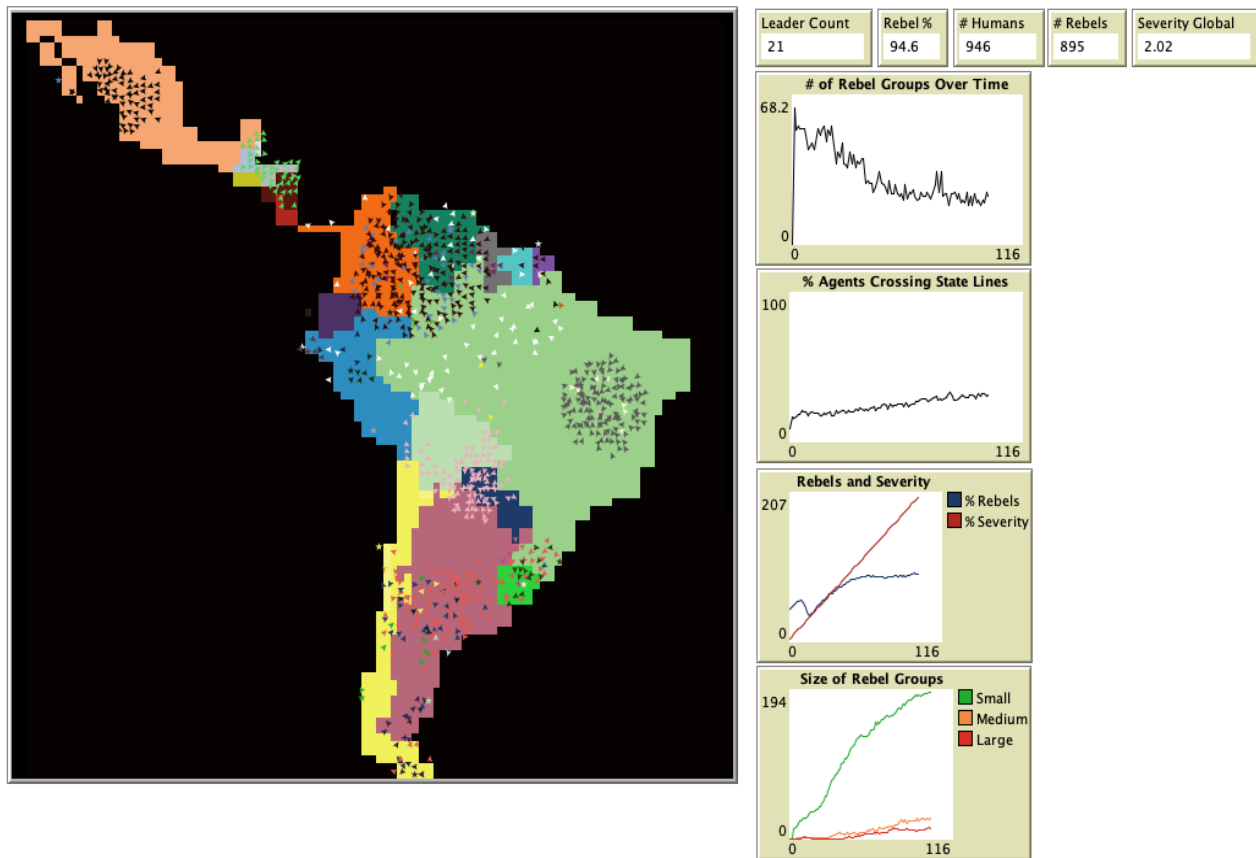


Figure 5: Netlogo Interface at Finish (Ethnic attachment = .05)

In support of Horowitz's claims that the costs of secession are so extremely high that many groups have no chance of succeeding, there is a significant relationship ( $r = -.84$ ) between the level of cost and the number of groups that can form. Without any cost, numerous multi-ethnic rebellions are able to succeed and grow throughout the simulation but very few flourish when costs are high, as seen in the following *Figure 6* and *Figure 7*. In some runs of the model, rebellions fail to form entirely when the cost is set at maximum.

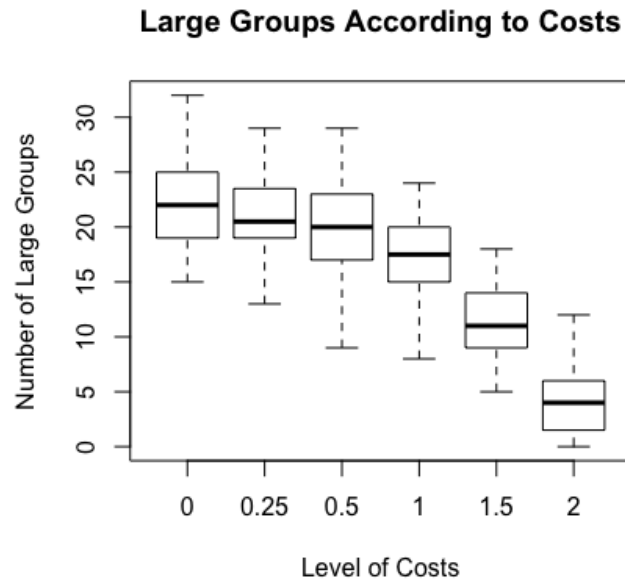


Figure 6: Costs of Secession's impact on group formation

Table 1:

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Small (1)	Medium (2)	Large (3)
EthnicGroups	-15.423*** (0.795)	-2.569*** (0.177)	0.302** (0.119)
Costs	-31.763*** (1.846)	-9.434*** (0.410)	-8.762*** (0.277)
EthnAttach	53.956*** (3.673)	6.889*** (0.816)	3.306*** (0.551)
Constant	156.911*** (3.193)	31.223*** (0.709)	21.432*** (0.479)
Observations	360	360	360
R <sup>2</sup>	0.714	0.695	0.746
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.711	0.693	0.743
Residual Std. Error (df = 356)	24.639	5.474	3.696
F Statistic (df = 3; 356)	295.993***	270.613***	347.840***

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Figure 7: Multiple linear regression analysis

However, what was unexpected was the very similar result for the first four levels of costs. There is little difference between the average amount of large groups formed when costs equal to either 0 or .5. A baseline of ethnicity is enough to surpass the price of rebellion until the large drop-off at level 1.5. The agents' ethnic and minority ties are able to sustain a rebellion until the costs become too high and pass between the 1.5 and 2 thresholds. This makes sense when considering the scaling which represents level 0 costs as no intervention and level 2 costs as international backlash. Even with costs presenting a challenge, highly ethnic agents will choose to rebel anyway.

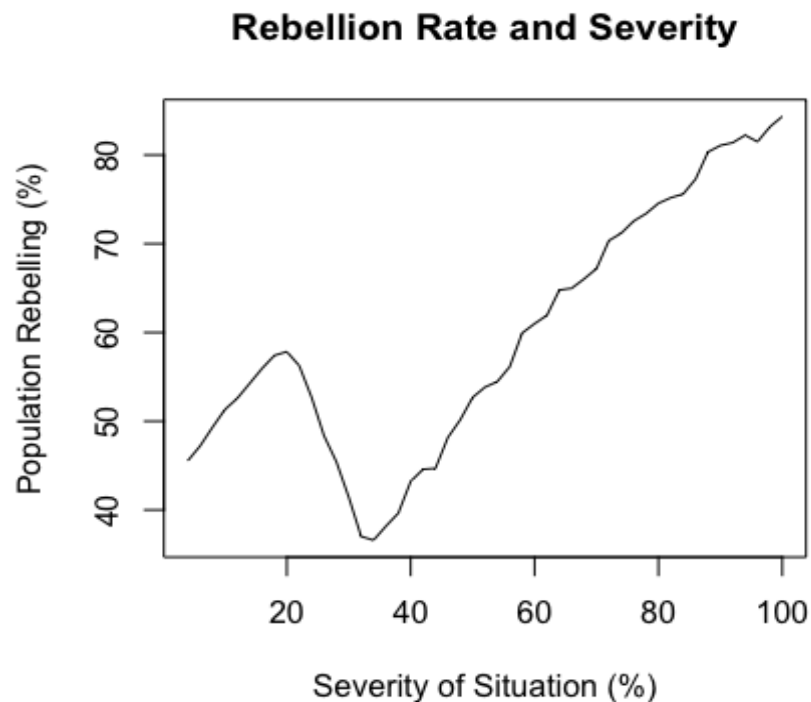


Figure 8: The relationship between severity and rebellions (Ethnic attachment = .06 - .08)

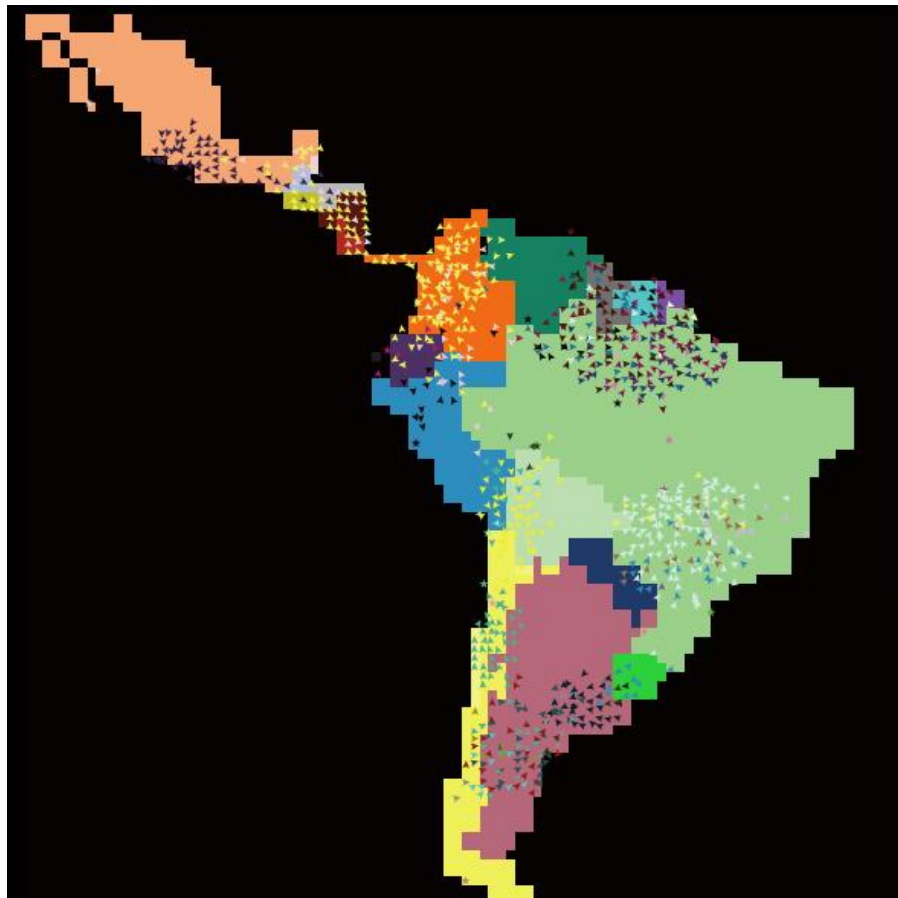
An unexpected finding that arose from multiple runs of the model is the exact pattern of population rebellion. It was expected that there would be a linear relationship between the

severity of the situation and the number of agents that chose to rebel against their states. In actuality, starting at 20% severity there is a decline until around 35-36% severity in the amount of rebel agents, this number then rebounds and continues to increase until reaching the cap of all agents rebelling, as seen in the above *Figure 8*. This phenomenon is present for numerous reasons. The initial rebelling agents are highly ethnic and extremely passionate about their cause, even without a very severe situation their ethnic identities are so salient and their risk-taking score so high that they are willing to rebel. However, these agents burn out quickly: there are not enough people willing to join them yet, they are surrounded by non-rebel agents who influence them to stop rebelling, and their burnout timer begins without the mediating factor of gathered resources. All of the agents who are ethnically motivated, but who waited for resources and higher hardship, are the next people who rebel in the second wave. The second wave agents are then in a position where agents who rebel due to the severe situation join them under their leadership. This information supports the idea that a lower saliency ethnic identity can be used in order to form rebel groups; a severe situation is necessary to create large rebellions, but high ethnic group attachment is not. The most successful second wave agents were still ethnic but succeeded because their attachment to their own personal ethnic group was not unduly high. These individuals were able to attract agents from outside their own ethnic group due to their own moderate values.

The relationship between ethnic attachment and the number of multi-ethnic groups is a bit more difficult to interpret. While there is a positive correlation between the number of large groups and the level of ethnic attachment ( $r = .16$ ), the relationship is very weak; this is because it should be expected that if agents are highly attached to their ethnic identity, they will refuse to join with others of a different ethnicity. Agents with a moderately strong attachment to their



ethnicity are more likely to be able to join with a group of different others. There is a much stronger relationship between ethnic attachment and total number of groups ( $r = .39$ ), as with a higher level of ethnic attachment, many more small, single ethnicity rebellions form.



*Figure 9: The issue with high ethnic attachment (Ethnic Attachment = .80, Tick = 100)*

The image, *Figure 9*, above shows the problematic nature of attempting to consolidate rebellions. There are many clusters of numerous colors; multiple rebellions co-exist in the same area without consolidating because they are of different ethnic backgrounds. As there is no other mechanism impacting the joining together of groups, only the problem of highly salient ethnicities is preventing them from consolidating. The high ethnic attachment score of .80 causes

even moderately opinioned leaders to attract only members of the own ethnic group. In the earlier *Figure 5*, the ethnic attachment was set to .05 and the groups are much clearer and uniform. However, no matter the ethnic attachment, if the costs were not completely overwhelming, ethnic consolidation occurs. For each level of ethnic attachment, there are numerous widespread movements of multi-ethnic groups.

### ***Variations to the Model***

The model could easily be adapted to fit the circumstances of any country facing ethnic conflict. Using the sliders and a scale such as the Gini index in order to determine level of inequality, any country's specific situation could be shown in the model. Additionally, with an import of a different image file and elevation data, the mapping of the possible outcome of a country's ability to sustain widespread ethnic rebellion would be visible. For example, in a country like Bolivia, it would be possible to see if the Aymara people during the Katarista era were in a favorable position to be able to collect resources and slowly spread, leading to their success in changes for Native rights in the 1980s.

Improvements or edits to the model primarily include the impact of severity. For the purposes of this paper, severity was linear and impacted the entire region identically. This, of course, is not representative of the real world, but did not specifically impact the questions asked in this research paper. However, edits to the severity clock can be made to change from the linear pattern and furthermore (using lists) severity could be programmed to represent a real timeline for one country or another. Severity and costs could also be set individually per country which would also increase the generalizability to the real world. The implementation of police or other

governmental backlash could also be a change used to heighten the model's realism; including agents who could repress rebellions may lead to interesting results of the number of agents needed to quell uprisings.

In the past, ethnically dissimilar individuals and groups have combined in order to be more effective against the state or colonizer, however, that does not necessarily mean that the consolidation is either long term or permanent; after the struggle is over, there is less of a bond between different ethnic groups and a common enemy is not enough to sustain a rebellion (Horowitz, 2014, p.10). The model does not attempt to show what the rebellions or groups would look like after the end of severity; this model took into consideration that Latin America has faced systematic inequality and repression throughout its history and up until present, the situation of equality is and will be poor.

## **Conclusion**

Historical evidence supports that ethnic groups in Latin America have combined in order to be more effective in a conflict. Due to the highly repressive and continuously unequal situation that ethnic minorities in Latin America have faced, those who label themselves as “ethnic” are able to join with others in a similar situation, no matter their ethnicity. The Netlogo agent-based model supports numerous ideas:

1. More moderately opinioned agents are successful at starting rebellions, “second-wave” agents who collect resources and followers slowly are able to expand and join with other moderately opinioned groups.

2. Due to the ethnic burnout found in passionate ethnic conflict, a region with groups that all have highly salient ethnic group identities will form more small, fleeting rebellions than large multi-ethnic groups.
3. Costs of secession and rebellion are a severe factor limiting widespread rebellion, but the factor of being ethnically attached is able to sustain rebellion formation until reaching a high threshold of costs.

These ideas point towards one feasible theory concerning the cases discussed earlier in this paper. It is possible that ethnicity can be both a dividing and combining force when understanding conflict between minorities and the repressive state or majority. In a case like Bolivia, Natives have joined forces to push forth candidates, have staged massive protests, and have been able to make changes to Bolivia's Constitution concerning Native rights. These positive changes would not have been possible without group consolidation. In other parts of the world, with less severe situations, the consolidation may not be possible, but with Latin America's problems of corruption, drug trafficking, and under-representation, a highly severe situation may be able to sustain moderately ethnic, consolidated rebel movements.

Despite these claims, of course there have been instances of violent ethnic conflict between nearby tribes and ethnic minorities and times of hardship without moves towards rebellion or secession.

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